

Essay on rite of passage

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In many communities in the world, a rite of passage is an event that that marks the transition of an individual's life from one stage to another (Nelson, 2012). This paper will discuss rite of passage and the stages involved.

Rites of passage can either be for sacred or religious purposes, for example, baptism which is a religious rite of passage or tattooing which is a secular rite of passage in America (Scharwz, 2006). The rites of passage are very important socio-cultural practices in the communities that practice them and are normally in three phases, namely: separation, transition, and reincorporation (Berry, 1984). Separation is where the individuals to undergo initiation are taken away from the society, while transition is the period where they have left the previous stage but have not yet joined the next and incorporation is where the initiates join the next stage.

As believer in the Roman Catholic Church, I went through a rite of passage in order to receive my first Holy Communion. I had to undergo catechism classes in order to be baptised. During this, we were taught of the catholic dogma as young children so that we could understand the laws of the church. After baptism, which normally celebrated in the church in the presence of the congregation, parents and guardians, we are moved to the next stage. We were again taken through catechism classes where we were taught of the origin, meaning and importance of the practices that is done in the church, for example the sign of the cross and the taking of sacrament. It is a spiritually nourishing rite of passage as I and other participants learnt about the church and its practices, we got to understand the meaning of activities we do every Sunday during the mass in church, for example, why we should go to the priest for confession. This rite of passage has three

phases because we were separated and taught in a different class for a period, after completion, a ceremony was organised to re unite us with the church. It is during the ceremony that we are given the first Holy Communion. The importance of this ceremony is that it opens the door for us to be considered as rightful members of the church who can be rightfully married in the Catholic Church and even rise to the position of leadership in the

church; this is why many individuals aspire to undergo this rite of passage

In conclusion, rites of passage are a worldwide practice with each and every community or group having their own and different rites of passage. Despite the difference in these rites, the three phases are however observed by majority if not all of these communities. However, the bottom line of a rite of passage is to raise the status of an individual from one stage of life into another one.

Nelson, B. Pamela. “ Reviving Rites of Passage in America” 2012. Web 23 November 2012 < http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/documents/Rites_of_Passage.pdf>

Berry, Edward. “ Rites of Passage” 1984. Web 23 November 2012

Schwarz, Trudelle, Maureen. “ Native American Tattoos: Identity and Spirituality in Contemporary America” 2006. Web 23 November 2012 http://www.hawaii.edu/hivandaids/Native_American_Tattoos__Identity_and_Spirituality_in_Contemporary_America.pdf